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CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST: A TWENTIETH CENTURY LEGACY AND A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHALLENGE

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Charles C. Campbell
United States Army

Colonel Charles E. Heller
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

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Since the end of World War II, the Middle East has witnessed the clash of religions, ideologies, and emergency nation states. All of these conflicts are, in a very real sense, an outgrowth of the political arrangements imposed upon the Middle East by Britain, France, and Russia after the First World War. This study examines the extent to which the political arrangements imposed by the allies after the First World War have contributed to the upheavals that plague the Middle East today. The study focuses on the British experiences in the Middle East and the lessons that can be learned from that experience. The study concludes by addressing the degree to which the region's political inheritance has implications for the nature of U.S. security strategy. in the Middle East.

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ABSTRACT

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Since the end of World War II, the Middle East has witnessed the clash of religions, ideologies, and emergent nation-states. All of these conflicts are, in a very real sense, an outgrowth of the political arrangements imposed upon the Middle East by Britain, France, and Russia after the First World War. This study examines the extent to which the political arrangements imposed by the Allies after the First World War have contributed to the upheavals that plague the Middle East today. The study focuses on the British experience in the Middle East and the lessons that can be learned from that experience. The study concludes by addressing the degree to which the region's political inheritance has implications for the nature of U.S. national security strategy in the Middle East.

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, the Middle East has witnessed the clash of religions, ideologies, and emergent nation-states. All of these conflicts, including the four Arab-Israeli wars, the on-going struggle in Lebanon, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Kurdish rebellions, and the present crises fomented by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait are, in a very real sense, an outgrowth of the political arrangements imposed upon the region by Britain, France, and Russia after the First World War.

The political boundaries of the modern Middle East emerged from decisions made by the Allies during and after the First World War. In the aftermath of that war, the British and French dismantled the Ottoman Empire and in the process created an assortment of countries in the Middle East modeled after the European nation-state. Modern Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and the various Persian Gulf oil states all trace their origins back to this process. The states of the modern Middle East, with Egypt and Israel being the notable exceptions, did not come into existence as a result of the expressed will of their own people. Nor did the states of the Middle East grow out of a mutual history, a shared language, or a common ethnic bond. They also did not emerge out of a political contract between those who would rule and those who would be ruled. Rather, their geographical boundaries and political structures were imposed by European imperial powers. These had little precedence in either the ancient or contemporary histories of the region. Indeed, the boundaries that came into being were drawn to accomodate the foreign policy, economic interests and resource

requirements of European powers and for the most part did not account for the ethnic, tribal, linquistic, or religious realities on the ground.

The purpose of this study is to examine the origins of conflict in the Middle East and the extent to which the political arrangements imposed on the region by the Allies after the First World War have contributed to the upheavals that plaque the region today. The study includes an examination of the British experience in fashioning a Middle East settlement subsequent to World War I and the degree to which that experience is relevant to the involvement of the United States in the region. Lastly, the study addresses the degree to which the region's political inheritance has implications for the nature of U.S. national security strategy in Middle East and the manner in which it is implemented.

ORIGINS OF CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The reshaping of the Middle East was a function of Great Power politics at a unique time in history. It occurred at the high water mark of European imperialism when European powers controlled the political destinies of peoples in virtually every region of the globe. The establishment of Allied control in the Middle East following World War I was, as David Fromkin recounts in his readable and well-researched book on the Middle East, the last chapter in the saga of European imperialism.[1]

It represented the zenith of a period of European territorial acquisition that had its beginnings centuries before with the colonization of the Americas. The saga of European imperialism unfolded throughout the nineteenth century as Britain established herself in the Asian sub-continent and other European powers carved out colonies in Africa, the Far East, and the Pacific. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the Middle East was one of the few remaining regions of the world that was untouched by the efforts of European powers to extend their influence, power, and dominion. Indeed, the last chapter of European imperialism would chronicle the story of a Middle East that found itself a hapless victim of efforts to reshape it in the social, cultural, and political image of Europe.

The Crossroads Of History

In addition to coinciding with the high-water mark of European imperialism, the reshaping of the Middle East in the aftermath of World War I also occurred at the same time as the culmination of the nineteenth century "Great Game". This term was associated with British efforts, from Napoleonic times onward, to protect her links with India from Russian encroachment. For more than a hundred years, the British obsession with protecting her access to India defined and shaped her policy and strategy in the Middle East. Indeed, any full understanding of British involvement in the Middle East must include an awareness of Britain's deep and historical concern for protecting access to her richest and most prized possession in the East, the crown colony of India.

During the eighteenth century Britain established a global empire that incorporated widely dispersed holdings in virtually every region of the world. The vulnerability of her far-flung empire was dramatically exposed in 1798 when Napoleon invaded Egypt and marched on Syria with the intention of striking into India by way of Mesopotamia. Britain's response to the threat posed to the lifelines that linked the empire was to fashion a policy supporting Middle Eastern regimes in their efforts to prevent European imperialism. The distinctive feature of Britain's Middle East policy was not to control the region but to keep other European

powers out.

A succession of British governments throughout the nineteenth century pursued a policy of supporting and, often times, propping up weak and ineffectual Islamic regimes in Asia against the encroachment of European powers. Inherent within this policy was a tacit commitment to preserve the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire as a buffer between her lifeline to India and the Russians who threatened to sever that lifeline. Such a policy soon brought Britain into conflict with Russia, whose historical desire was to expand southwards and eastwards to secure warm water ports. Indeed, as David Fromkin suggests, defeating Russian designs in Asia emerged as the obsessive goal of generations of British civilian and military officials.[2]

Britain pursued that goal by attempting to insure friendly control of the stategically dominating positions at either end of the region. In western Asia the locus of stategic concern was Constantinople or as it is presently known, Istanbul. Situated above the straits of the Dardanelles, it controlls both the land juncture of Europe and Asia and the water-way link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea . As such, it figured prominently in world politics for centuries and was a point where British and Russian interests converged. From the British perspective, so long as Constantinople remained in friendly hands, her powerful navy was able to sail through the Dardanelles into the Black Sea, threaten the Russian fleet, dominate the Black Sea coastline, and put Russian trade at risk.

Conversely, if Russia could establish control over the straits, she could not only deny the British fleet access to the Black Sea, but also send her fleet into the Mediterranean to threaten the British lifeline to India.

In the eastern portion of the region in and adjoining Afghanistan, the locus of strategic concern was the stretch of rugged mountain ranges dominating the plains of British India. Control of this area was key to the defense of India and the British aim, therefore, was to prevent Russia from establishing any sort of presence.

For decades the "Great Game" was played against a panoply of backdrops ranging from the deserts of Central Asia to the rugged Himalayan frontier. It was a high stakes game of dominion played gallantly by intrepid and unheralded men in remote places with unfamiliar names like Turkestan, Afghanistan, Transcaspia, Persia, and Uzbekistan. In the end, Britain prevailed, only to find her interests threatened by a new adversary. In 1871, Germany established herself as a power with her impressive victory over France in the Franco-Prussian War. With global aspirations, within a matter of decades she replaced Russia as the most significant threat to British interests. Germany's entry on the international scene in the late nineteenth century marked the beginning of a new age in politics.[3]

The emergence of Germany as a preeminent continental power, compelled Britain to fashion international alliances to maintain the balance of power on the European continent. As a result, she entered into

an alliance with France to counter growing German strength and influence. Insofar as France was allied to Russia, Britain was compelled, for purposes of consistency, to abandon counteralliances against Russia. The result was a treaty negotiated between Britain and Russia in 1907 which reconciled the differences between the two countries in Asia. By the terms of the treaty, Tibet was neutralized; Russia gave up her interests in Afghanistan, and left control of that country's foreign policy in Britain's hands; and Persia was divided into a Russian zone, a neutral zone, and a British zone.[4] The Treaty of 1907 effectively brought to an end the "Great Game".

While Britain was bringing the "Great Game" to a satifactory resolution and posturing to counter the threats posed by an emergent Germany, most of the Middle East lay, as it had for centuries, under the benign and uninspired sway of the Ottoman Empire. Petty intrigues at court, a corrupt bureaucracy, shifting tribal alliances, and an apathetic population were the impressions that most westerners had of the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the century.[5] Indeed, these impressions endure even today. They are however, somewhat misleading and over-simplistic for they do not touch upon the complexity, diversity, and resilience of a multinational, multi-lingual empire that endured for over six-hundred years.

At its peak, in the early sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire stretched from the Persian Gulf in the east to the Danube River in the

west. It included most of the Middle East, North Africa, and what are now the Balkan countries of Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary.

By the early twentieth century the Ottoman Empire was in the final stages of a decline that dated back to the late sixteenth century. By 1914, the much-diminished Ottoman Empire was a pondersome anachronism in a modern world. It was an empire whose coherence had eroded because of a host of divisive factors. Its subjects were ethnically diverse, spoke a variety of languages, and had little in common with, and in many cases little love for, one another. It included peoples of different history, ethnic background, and outlook. In sum, the Ottoman Empire was a multi-national, multi-lingual mosaic of peoples who did not mix.[6]

Religion had a unifying effect of sorts. The Ottoman Empire was a theocracy and as such a Muslim rather than a Turkish state. The Ottoman Sultan was regarded as the legitimate temporal and spiritual leader by the majority group within Islam, the Sunnis. But among others of the seventy-one sects of Islam, particularly the Shi'ites, there was doctrinal opposition to the Sultan's faith and strong objection to his claim of spiritual leadership. These views were shared by those who were not Muslim, the Greek Othodox, the Roman Catholic, the Armenian Catholic, the Maronite Christians and the Jews to name but a few, who composed about twenty-five percent of the Ottoman Empire's population at the beginning of the twentieth century.

To the turn of the century observer, the Ottoman Empire may have seemed to be ruling its diverse populations and far-flung territories with a measure of effectiveness. Its carefully engineered system of provinces and cantons appeared adequate for the purposes of administering the civil affairs of the empire. However, the outward appearance of an effective centralized authority was a facade behind which disorder, selective disobedience, and lawlessness often prevailed. In truth, power within the Ottoman Empire was diffused and the practice of centralized authority was more a myth than a reality.

This was the state of health of the Ottoman Empire at the time that events compelled the Great European Powers to clash in the cataclysmic struggle of World War I. The Empire's unfortunate and ill-advised decision to enter the war on the side of Germany sealed its fate. The decision set into motion a series of events that resulted in an alliance between Britain and the Arab Muslim world. The alliance was sought by Britain as a means for breaking the stalemate on the western front by enabling her to strike at Germany through the Balkans. To gain Arab support, Britain gave secret assurances that she would support the establishment of an independent Arab state in the Arabian Peninsula after the war. The defeat of the Central Powers and the Ottoman Empire allowed Britain to occupy and partition the Middle East as a part of the peace settlement.

Britain's Reversal of Policy in the Middle East

When the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War, the British government had no territorial designs on its lands in the Middle East. Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey and First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill did not intend to seize any Ottoman territory though they did propose to allow Britain's allies to make territorial claims in Ottoman Europe and Asia Minor. This position was soon to erode under the pressure of demands from a variety of divergent sources.

First, Lord Kitchener, the extremely popular and influential Minister of War, maintained that when the war was over, it was in Britain's vital interest to seize much of the Ottoman Empire, particularly the Arab-speaking portion. He advocated the seizure of Alexandretta, a port on the Asian mainland opposite the British-controlled island of Cyprus, and Arab-speaking Mesopotamia. The seizure of these territories, he argued, would allow Britain to control a convenient and safe land route to India as well as shield the Persian Gulf from the designs of expansionist Russia. Kitchener's views were shared by Sir Arthur Hirtzel of the India Office who, in a departure from the traditional reluctance of the Government of India to assume further territorial responsibilities, urged that the Mesopotamian provinces of Basra and Bagdad be incorporated into the Indian Empire.

Secondly, impetus for a reversal of British policy was created in March 1915 by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Sazanov. In response to what at the time appeared to be an impending British success at Gallipoli, he demanded that the Allies acknowledge and support Russian claims to Constantinople and the Dardanelles. Further, he demanded that the Allies clarify their war aims in the Middle East. As a result of Sazanov's demands, Britain and France agreed to support Russian claims to Constantinople and the Dardanelles. This represented a complete reversal of the traditional policy of the British government with regard to control of the Dardanelles and came about as a result two considerations. First, the agreement reflected Sir Edward Grey's belief that in satisfying Russian aspirations with regard to the straits, Russia would be less inclined to press claims in Persia, eastern Europe and elsewhere. Secondly, it reflected British fears that in the absence of suitable inducements to continue in the war, Russia might conclude a separate peace with Germany.

In the correspondence that comprised the Constantinople agreement, Russia compelled the British government to formulate its own territorial demands in the Middle East. A lively debate involving the War Ministry, the Foreign Ministry, the British government in India and the British government in Egypt ensued over a variety of possible territorial settlements. Particulars notwithstanding, a general consensus emerged that supported British claims to territorial control over an area from the

Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf that generally encompassed what are now the modern states of Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq.

Thus, at least conceptually, Britain reversed two longstanding foreign policies and did so rather quickly. In the 100 days between the outbreak of war with Germany and the outbreak of war with the Ottoman Empire, Britain had overturned the foreign policy of more than a century by abandoning its tacit commitment to preserve the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. In like fashion, in the 150 days following the outbreak of the war with the Ottoman Empire, the Asquith government came to embrace the view that not only was the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire desirable, but that British interests would be served by territorial acquisitions in the Middle East.

The reversal of these two bedrock policies assured that the post-Ottoman political destinies of its peoples would be taken into hand by one or more of the European powers. Perhaps more importantly, the abandonment of a long-standing reluctance to acquire territories in the Middle East drove Britain both in a specific and a general sense to involve herself more deeply in Middle Eastern affairs. It was the first step along what was to be a very turbulent and tempetuous road to the creation of the modern Middle East.

New Lands and New Possibilities

Though the Asquith government committed Britain to territorial acquisition in the Middle East, it did so without a clear vision of the form that it should take. It remained for the government of Prime Minister Lloyd George to convert the conceptual notion of British territorial presence in the Middle East to a reality. The military debacle at Gallipoli, setbacks in Mesopotamia, and the lack of imaginative leadership in prosecuting the war in Europe, all contributed to the overthrow of the Asquith government. As Asquith's successor, Prime Minister Lloyd George, an energetic and pragmatic career politician, embraced the notion of British territorial presence in the Middle East with an abiding passion typical of his forceful and determined personality. In addition to seeing the value of the Middle East as a land link between British territories in Africa and the Asian sub-continent, Lloyd George came to believe that holdings in the Middle East could be the source of economic strength for Britain.[7] Unlike nineteenth century British Prime Ministers, whose aim was limited to excluding other European powers from the region, Lloyd George, therefore, sought to establish both territorial and economic presence in the region.

Lloyd George's enthusiasm for British possibilities in the Middle East was, to a large degree, colored by developments in Europe. In his view, the incredible destruction wrought in the first three years of the

war made it difficult to fashion a peace that would compensate Britain for her losses in men, materiel, and national treasure. It clearly was not feasible to advance territorial claims in Europe. Nor would the total destruction of Germany satisfy Britain's needs as that would be at cross-purposes with British policy to maintain a European balance of power. In Lloyd George's view, if Britain was to be revived from the debilitating costs of the war, it would have to be through imperial expansion, partly in Africa but principally in the Middle East. Further, his strategy was to revive the British Empire's sagging fortunes by providing the connecting link between its territories in Africa and those in Asia and the Pacific.

With that as a goal, Britain went about the process of cementing the geographical links of the territories comprising the British Empire. The British capture of German East Africa created a continuous stretch of controlled territories between Cape Town, the Atlantic Ocean port at the southern tip of Africa, and Suez, bridging the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.[8]

The capture of Baghdad in March of 1917 by Major-General Stanley Maude and his Anglo-Indian Army of the Tigris, served to reverse British fortunes in Mesopotamia and established British presence in the Arab-speaking territories that abutted British-controlled Persia. With the occupation of Baghdad, Britain controlled a stretch of territory that extended from northern Mesopotamia through Persia and Afghanistan to

the Indian Empire. The stretch of British territory continued onwards through Burma and Malaya and was anchored in her two great dominions in the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. Yet, Palestine remained the missing link, the territory whose occupation could join the parts of the British Empire to form a continuous chain from the Atlantic to the mid-Pacific.

In autumn of 1917, General Sir Edmund Allenby leading the Egyptian Expeditionary Force invaded Palestine. By December he succeeded in capturing Jerusalem and in September of the following year, he captured Damascus. As a result, Britain controlled the lands on either side of the Jordan River and finally secured the link between Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Thus, by the autumn of 1918 the final link in the British imperial chain had been forged. What remained of course, was the far more difficult work of shaping policies to govern the British occupation of Palestine, Transjordan, and Mesopotamia; enable Britain to exercise control over Persia and Afghanistan; and provide for the disposition of Lebanon and Syria.

British flexibility in shaping policy in 1918 was constrained by the terms of the May 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement. The Sykes-Picot Agreement was a secret treaty between Britain, France, and Russia that grew out of the latter's demands to codify the war aims of the Allies in the Middle East. The treaty recognized Russian claims to Constantinople and the Dardanelles. It also provided direct French rule in much of

northern and western Syria, plus a sphere of influence in the Syrian hinterland which included Damascus, Aleppo, and Mosul. Under the provisions of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, Britain would rule lower Mesopotamia directly. It would also advise an Arab government controlling a stretch of land between the Egyptian border and eastern Arabia. The agreement thus provided indirect British control from the Mediterranean to the Gulf. The agreement also provided a small area around Jaffa and Jerusalem with important Christian holy places under international control. Lastly, the treaty established an independent Arab state under a British-influenced monarch in the Arabian desert. [9]

What emerged over time was generally in keeping with the Sykes-Picot Agreement. France established direct rule in Lebanon and Syria though she chose to ignore the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement with respect to the establishment of a sphere of influence in the Syrian hinterland under Arab Hashemite control.

British control in the Middle East was also established in accordance with the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Britain declared Egypt a protectorate in 1914. She also established direct rule in Mesopotamia in 1917 subsequent to her occupation of Baghdad. In August 1919, Persia, which had been divided into Russian and British spheres of influence since 1907, was added to the British sphere as an informal protectorate by a convention between the two countries signed. Britain continued to exercise control over Aden and the Gulf sheikdoms as she had

throughout the war as protectorates administered by the British Government of India. Britain secured a favorable position in the Arabian desert by alliances with the two most powerful tribal chieftains. In Palestine, Britain exercised direct control first by means of a military administration and then, after its disbandment in 1918, by a civil authority.

The Rising Storm

In a region of the globe whose predominantly Muslim inhabitants were known to dislike foreigners, and could abide being ruled by almost anyone except non-Muslims, it was not surprising that Christian European powers encountered substantial hostility.[10] At the outset of the First World War, the three Allies achieved a unity of purpose in their agreement to partition the postwar Middle East. But confronted with broad-based challenges to their colonial rule in the form of nationalist movements, civil disobedience, and economic disruption, each European nation charted its own course consistent with its own vision of its national interests.

Of the three Allies, Britain faced the most widespread challenges. She confronted a long and seemingly endless series of spontaneous local rebellions against her authority. The first postwar challenge to Britain's Middle Eastern position was in Egypt. Repeatedly promised independence by Britain, Egyptian leaders reasonably expected that, at the end of the

war, London would announce a timetable leading to eventual independence. Such was not the case. Unwilling to relinquish control of the Suez Canal, Britain would not grant full and complete independence to Egypt. When this became clear, a wave of demonstrations and strikes swept the country, establishing a pattern of civil disorder with which Britain would would be forced to contend for years.

At the other end of her Middle Eastern holdings, Britain confronted a similar problem. The Emir of Afghanistan sought to assert complete independence in external as well as internal affairs. To achieve these ends, he planned to attack India through the Khyber Pass to coincide with a "nationalist uprising" against British rule in the Peshawar region of India. Britain responded by dispatching a native contingent under British officers that successfully ejected Afghan forces from India. In August of 1919, the Treaty of Rawalpindi brought the Third Afghan War to an end. By the terms of the treaty, Britain conceded the complete independence of Afghanistan and relinquished control over its foreign affairs. The latter was significant because it meant that Britain had lost the ability to preclude foreign powers from controlling the strategically important Afghan mountains dominating the Indian plains.

As in Afghanistan, British fortunes in Arabia at the end of the war took a downturn. Britain found itself in the unenviable position of supporting two allies who were avowedly oppose to each other. The differences between Hussein, King of the Hejaz, the moutainous region

that bordered the Red Sea in the western portion of the Arabian Peninsula, and Ibn Saud, the Lord of the Nejd, the central region of the Arabian Peninsula, were related to geography and religion. Both laid claims to the same oases and grazing rights in areas in central Arabia. More importantly, the deep rooted religious beliefs of the fiercely puritanical Wahhabi sect led by Ibn Saud made it impossible for them to recognize the spiritual authority of the Sunni Hussein and set them on an inevitable road to armed conflict. When conflict came, Ibn Saud inflicted a staggering defeat on the Hejazi army. Britain intervened to impose a tenuous armistice that did little more than delay the inevitable success of Ibn Saud in establishing his control over the majority of the Arabian Peninsula. British prestige suffered irreparably as a result of her inability to maintain the puppet regime of King Hussein.

In Mesopotamia, communal strife, tribal rivalries, and Arab nationalism combined to frustrate British efforts to establish a coherent government in the area. The merged provinces of Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul did not make a coherent entity. For example, the province of Mosul was populated principally by Kurds reluctant to accept Arab rule. To further complicate matters, the almost two million Shi'ite Muslims in Mesopotamia were unwilling to submit to the minority Sunni Muslim community. Britain found herself confronted by widespread dissatisfaction with her efforts to establish a government that was at the same time representative, effective, and widely supported.[11]

In Persia, Lord Curzon, Foreign Minister in 1919, wanted to organize a British supervised regime to transform it from an inefficiently governed country into a self-sufficient, modern nation-state. He proposed to create a British infrastructure responsible for constructing and managing a national railway, reorganizing the national finances, and supervising the collection of customs. Lord Curzon erroneously believed the Persians would support such an arrangement. He also assumed that, as in times past, the Persians would welcome British protection from Russian expansionism. Nothing could have been further from the truth. The collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917 removed the threat of expansionism and by 1919, to most Persians the major threat to their autonomy was posed by the British. As a result, opposition to Lord Curzon's proposal was so widespread that it was abandoned. This was to be the first step in a series that would culminate in British withdrawal from Persia.[12]

In Palestine, British policy was characterized by vacillation and a lack of certitude that puzzled Arabs and Jews alike and resulted in dissatisfaction and unrest in both camps. In 1917 the British government ennunciated the Balfour Declaration which committed Britain to support and assist in the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine posed many difficulties. British officials found themselves beseiged by demands from Arabs to abandon the policy while at the same time pressured by Jewish

nationalists to make it unmistakably clear that the Balfour Declaration was unalterable policy.

The riots in Egypt, the war in Afghanistan, the uprisings in Mesopotamia, the religious wars in Arabia, and the unrest in Palestine all came when Britain was in the grip of an economic crisis and profound social and political change at home. Though there appeared to be no connection between the events in Egypt, Afghanistan, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Palestine, taken collectively they tended to suggest that Britain had overextended her imperial commitments. This then, was the backdrop against which the Settlement of 1922 was framed.

The Settlement of 1922

The diplomatic dilema confronting the Great Powers after World War I was fashioning a series of arrangements to provide for a Middle East territorial division acceptable to all. The Settlement of 1922 amounted to a solution of that dilema. First, it resolved the issue as to where Russia's political frontier in the Middle East would be drawn by establishing it along a northern tier of states that stretched from Turkey to Iran to Afghanistan. Second, it resolved the disposition of the Ottoman Empire by terminating the Ottoman Sultanate and partitioning the Ottoman Empire's Middle Eastern domains between Turkey, France, and Britain. It was not a

single document, rather, it was the design that emerged from many separate acts and agreements that date mostly from that year.

The Ottoman Sultan was disposed and a Turkish national state established by unanimous votes of its Grand National Assembly on 1 and 2 November1922. Turkey's eventual frontiers grew out of the armistice she signed with the Allies in the autumn of 1922, and by a peace treaty with the Allies signed at the Swiss city of Lausanne the following year.[13]

Russia's territorial frontier in the Middle East was established by its draft constitution promulgated at the end of 1922 which reasserted her rule in Muslim Central Asia and in the Transcaucasus region encompassing Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Her political frontier emerged from the treaties she signed with Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan which allied those countries under Russia's aegis against Britain imperialism.[14]

The Ottoman domains in the Middle East that did not become a part of the newly established state of Turkey were partitioned between Britain and France. League of Nations Mandates in 1922 were for France to rule Syria and Lebanon, and for Britain to rule Palestine including Transjordan in 1922. There was also the British treaty of 1922 with Iraq (Mesopotamia) which Britain construed as a mandate to rule that newly created country, and the Allenby Declaration which established nominal independence for Egypt.[15]

The British and French went about implementing the Settlement of

1922 in their respective spheres in different ways. The French Mandate to rule Syria was intended to be an interim step in a process that would eventually lead to independence. The French however, attached little importance to the pledge of independence and sought to establish a colonial relationship with Syria. Indeed, French authorities divided Syria into sub-units to make it easier to manage. One of the sub-units was Great Lebanon, the forerunner of present-day Lebanon. In addition to the old Ottoman canton, in which the Maronite Christians and their traditional enemies, the Druses, were centered, Great Lebanon included the coastal cities of Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, and Tyre, as well as the the Bekaa Valley in the interior of the country. The addition of the coastal as well as the interior areas resulted in an infusion of large Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim populations who would have preferred to be aligned with Muslim dominated Syria. The intent was to create a economically viable entity, but instead the French created conditions that were to produce conflict, bloodshed, and anarchy as various Muslim factions challenged the leading position of the Maronite Christian minority.

Britain, like France, drew boundaries, established states, and appointed persons to govern them within her own sphere of influence. She placed Fuad I on the throne of Egypt in that year, and made Egypt a nominally independent protectorate by the terms of the Allenby Declaration. She established a protectorate for Iraq by treaty that year and placed her nominee, Feisal, on the throne. By the terms of the

Palestine Mandate of 1922 she reaffirmed the commitment as embodied in the Balfour Declaration to support the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine west of the Jordan River. Finally, in ennuciating Churchill's White Paper for Palestine in 1922 she removed Palestine east of the Jordan River from the League of Nations Mandate. In so doing she set Transjordan on the road to a political existence separate from Palestine under the Kingship of Abdullah, the son of the Hashemite King Hussein of the Hejaz and brother of Feisal, the newly appointed King of Iraq.

Having staked enormous claims to parts of the Ottoman Empire, Britain embittered the peoples of the Middle East, particularly the Arab-speaking populations. They were bitterly disappointed that their expectations went unfullfilled and as a result were deeply resentful of the arrangements embodied in the Settlement of 1922.

The peoples of the Middle East, particularly the Arabs, had been awakened from centuries of political lethargy: firstly, by the influence of western educators and missionaries; secondly, by exposure to westernizing and secular reforms in the years prior to the First World War; thirdly, by British and French assurances of post-war independence; and lasty, by the Wilsonian rhetoric of self-determination. In the place of a dismantled Ottoman Empire, the Arabs hoped to set up one or more states that would have the same sovereign rights as all other independent countries. Having helped the British and French defeat the Ottoman Turks, albeit their contribution is often exaggerated, the Arabs then witnessed

the British and French default on pledges that they had taken in good faith. In the fertile lands of lower Mesopotamia and in the Syrian hinterland where Arabs were clearly in the majority and where they hoped to form independent states, the Allies set up mandates that were little more than colonies in disguise. In Palestine, the Arabs witnessed incredulously as a Christian nation established a Jewish homeland in a Muslim country, leaving in doubt the future of its Arab inhabitants. These were the roots of Arab bitterness, put down in the form of the Settlement of 1922, that were to grow and bear the fruit of conflict in the late twentieth century.

While resolving the Middle Eastern question to the Allies satisfaction, the Settlement of 1922 gave rise to a Middle Eastern question in the Middle East itself. The Settlement of 1922 resolved as far as Europeans were concerned, the question of what, as well as who, would replace the Ottoman Empire. In its implementation however, the European powers created forces that remain unreconciled to the arrangements of 1922 and are in many cases committed to overthrowing them.

THE BRITISH LEGACY

Britain left a legacy that continues to color the political and social life of the Middle East and has at its core three fundamental elements. The first is that, in failing to satisfactorily implement the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, Britain sowed the seeds of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The second is that in having introduced a system of European nation-states into the Middle East, Britain was unable to legitimize that system and as a result gave rise to a tradition of violent and radical politics. Lastly, the imperialistic quality of her involvement in Middle Eastern affairs gave new impetus to the growth of anti-western sentiment.

The Seeds of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

When World War I ended, Britain's Egyptian Expeditionary Force occupied Palestine and set up a provisional military government in Jerusalem. This government soon became embroiled in a struggle between Jewish settlers, many of whom were political Zionists desiring the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, and the Arab inhabitants, who opposed the notion of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Within the nature of this struggle lies the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is not a conflict between Judaism and Islam. It is not a conflict that finds its antecedent in the estrangement of Isaac and Ishmael or has its origin in an ancient struggle between Hebrews and Canaanites. Rather, it is a conflict

that grew out of the rise of nationalism in modern times and as such it is fundamentally a struggle between Arab nationalism and Jewish Zionism.[16] It was Britain's failure to reconcile these conceptually parallel, but divergent notions that resulted in the modern Arab-Israeli conflict.

When the League of Nations awarded the Palestine mandate in July of 1922, it specifically charged Britain with carrying out the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration was a letter from the British Foreign Minister Sir Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild, the titular President of the Zionist Federation of Britain and Ireland. Announced in November 1917, it declared British intent to assist in the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The salient points of the Balfour Declaration were: the British government would help set up a national home in Palestine for the Jews; it would not undermine the rights or status of Jews choosing not to live there; and it would not harm the civil and religious rights of Palestine's existing non-Jewish communities.[17]

There have been many reasons proferred as to why the British government chose to ennunciate the Balfour Declaration. One explanation is that both the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, and the Foreign Secretary, Sir Arthur Balfour, had deep sympathy for the Jewish people and were motivated by a sense of Old Testament sentiment to support and assist them in their efforts to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. A more pragmatic explanation is that the Balfour Declaration provided the moral underpinning for British occupation of strategically important Palestine. A third and less credible explanation is that the Balfour Declaration was issued to galvanize support for the British war effort among American and

Russian Jews. For whatever reasons, and they have been endlessly disputed since 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration and subsequently committed itself to its implementation.[18]

The requirement to implement the Balfour Declaration distinguished the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine from other mandates. In Syria and Iraq it was obvious that the mandates were supposed to prepare their inhabitants to rule. In Palestine, however, although the native population was overwhelmingly Arab, the intent was to create a Jewish national home. The mandate obligated Britain explicitly, in the words of the preamble, to "be responsible for putting into effect the Declaration . . . in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."[19] Further, Article 2 of the mandate established Britain's primary obligation to "place the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home."[20] It was, concluded the Peel Commission which assessed Jewish grievances in Palestine in 1937, "unquestionably, the primary purpose of the mandate . . . . to promote the establishment of the Jewish National Home."[21] Though the rhetoric was veiled, it is also clear based on the comments of senior governmental officials, that a Jewish state was envisioned. Balfour said as much when remarking to the cabinet that "an independent Jewish State would gradually develop in accordance with ordinary laws of political evolution."[22] Lloyd George in testimony before the Peel Commission commented "that when the time arrived . . . . Palestine would become a Jewish Commonwealth."[23] Winston Churchill in a newspaper article in

1920 foresaw "the creation in our lifetime by the banks of the Jordan of a Jewish State under the protection of the British Crown."[24]

Though the intent was clear, British formulation of Palestinian policy in the years subsequent to the mandate was not always consistent. Indeed, something of a dichotomy emerged. While Lloyd George was Prime Minister, the highest levels of the British government espoused a markedly pro-Zionist policy. In Palestine, on the other hand, British officials tended to be decidedly pro-Arab, often influenced by concern for Muslim sentiment in neighboring countries and in India.

The ambiguous nature of British policy created the worst of all possible situations. It frustrated the Jews who perceived the British as vacillating in their resolve to carry out the mandate and it gave false hope to Palestinian Arabs causing them to be all the more intransigent in their opposition to a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Indeed, Ronald Sanders argues in his book, The High Walls of Jerusalem, that Palestinian Arab nationalism as we know it today was an offspring of the Balfour Declaration and the British mandate in Palestine.[25] He suggests that the manner in which the British executed the mandate transformed what were traditionally either Arabian or Syrian national aspirations into Palestinian national aspirations.

British enthusiasm for a Jewish state in Palestine began to wane shortly after the mandate was awarded. In 1922 Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill issued his white paper that restricted Jewish immigration and created the Emirate of Transjordan, effectively removing the two-thirds of Palestine that lay east of the Jordan River from the

Palestine mandate. The Churchill White Paper was the first in a series of actions that Britain took which met with dissatisfaction on the part of either the Arabs or the Jews or more commonly, both. In 1937, the Peel Commission, formed to investigate an outbreak of anti-Jewish riots and Arab-sponsored strikes, recommended the partitioning of the country into three entities: a Jewish state, an Arab state, and a British mandated territory which would include the Holy Places.[26] The proposal aroused strong protests among Jews and Arabs alike.

In 1939, eager to wash its hands of the Palestine mess, and in effect no longer committed to the Balfour Declaration, the government of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain issued another white paper calling for a bi-national Arab-Jewish state.[27] This proposal was also rejected by both the Arabs and the Jews. When the new Labor government of Clement Attlee took office at the end of World War II, there were hopes that a solution might still be found under the mandate. But by this time, Jewish opposition to British rule in Palestine had became a virtual rebellion. Weary and embittered by its inability to resolve the Palestinian question, the British in April 1947 finally referred the matter to the United Nations and thus acknowledged the bankruptcy of its Palestinian policy.

Before 1947 a compromise might have been found between the extremes of Arab nationalism and political Zionism. There were certainly many precedents within the Ottoman structure where minority populations enjoying civil and religious rights peacefully coexisted with majority populations of different religious beliefs, ethnic background, and outlook. But such a compromise had to address the protection of the economic and

civic rights of the Arab Palestinian population who did not want to be separated from other Arabs as second-class citizens within a Jewish state The British, as well as the Zionist movement, failed to dispel the fears of Palestinian Arabs and convincingly guarantee their rights. The legacy was the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War began when the British announced their intention to withdraw from Palestine and referred the problem of who should rule there to the United Nations. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition Palestine into two states based on population. One state was to be for Jews and would consist of the Negev Desert, the coastal plain between Tel Aviv and Haifa, and parts of the northern Galilee. The other state was for Arabs consisting of the West Bank of the Jordan River, the Gaza Strip, Jaffa, and the Arab sectors of the Galilee. Jerusalem, coveted by both Jews and Muslims as a holy city, was to become an international enclave under UN trusteeship.[28]

The Zionists, then led by David Ben-Gurion, accepted the partition plan. The Palestinian Arabs and neighboring Arab nations rejected the partition plan. These states included Egypt, which had gained independence by the terms of the Allenby Declaration in 1922; Iraq, which had been granted independence as a constitutional monarchy in 1932; Saudi Arabia, which was finally unified under the Saud family dynasty in 1932; Lebanon, which gained independence from France in 1943; Jordan, which became independent in May 1946 when the British mandate for Transjordan ended; and Syria, which emerged as an independent nation in 1946 after France had withdrawn from the region.

On May 14, 1948, the day after the Zionists declared their own state, the Palestinians aided by the armies of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq launched an attack to secure control of all of Palestine. The Israelis successfully defended their newly created state and, in fact, seized part of the land designated for the Palestinian state. The other areas designated for the Palestinian state by the U.N. were occupied by Egypt and Jordan. Neither country allowed the Palestinians to establish their own state in these occupied territories.

Since 1948, a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict has become exponentially more difficult to achieve because of the results of the 1948-1949 war and of the wars that followed. From the Arab perspective, each defeat humilitated their armies and discredited their regimes. Indeed, the ensuing years witnessed many Arab governments overturned and many Arab leaders assassinated. More consequentially, the Arab defeats in Palestine resulted in the displacement of millions of Arabs, who sought refuge in the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, or Lebanon. These Palestinian refugees have emerged as a potent force who espouse any ideology or back any leader who would give them back their dignity and their homes. They have become a radicalizing element in Middle Eastern politics in their uncompromising opposition to Israel and her Western supporters and in their unmatched hostility to any Arab regime that might make peace with the Jewish state.

The Radicalization of Politics

As previously suggested, today there are forces in the Middle East that remain unreconciled to the design imposed on the region by the Settlement of 1922. Indeed, it is the continuing opposition to that design and its underlying assumptions that explains the characteristic feature of the region's politics. That feature can best be expressed as an unwillingness to accord legitimacy to the nation-states that emerged from the settlement. In the conclusion to A Peace To End All Peace, David Fromkin contends that in the Middle East there is no sense of legitimacy and no belief universally shared in the region, that the countries or the men who claim to be rulers of those countries are entitled to recognition.[29]

He suggests that conflict in the Middle East is distinguished from conflict in other regions of the world by the frequency with which wars of national survival are fought. Some of the disputes, like those elsewhere in the world, are about rulers or frontiers or resources, but what is typical of the Middle East is that more often the issue in question is related to the right of a country to exist. Arabs and Israelis have fought four wars to determine whether Israel would exist as a state. The "intifada", the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, is currently being fought to determine whether a Palestinian state will exist. There have been numerous Kurdish rebellions that have been undertaken to establish an independent Kurdish state. There are many that believe that Syrian military presence in Lebanon is related to Syrian designs to incorporate Lebanon into a "Greater Syria". Certainly, the ongoing struggle between

the Maronite Christians, the Druse, and the various Sunni and Shiite factions call into question whether the state of Lebanon, as it is currently defined, can continue to exist. More recently, a U.S. led coalition fought a war with Iraq to insure the survival of Kuwait as a sovereign state. All of these suggest that conflict in the Middle East is, more often than not, related to issues of existence and survival.

With survival as the fundamental issue, conflict in the Middle East tends to take on an extremist, radical, and violent quality. This in turn, has contributed to a deeply rooted pattern of violent politics which is undergirded by a political tradition that emphasizes radical nationalism and extreme solutions.

It is the depth and survivalist quality of conflict in the Middle East that has endowed it with its distinctively brutal, violent, and radical character. Conflict in the Middle East will retain that quality until the transplanted notion of a political system based on independent, secular nation-states is universally accepted and until there is consensus with respect to which nations are entitled to be states. Until these conditions exist, the successors to the Ottoman sultans will never be legitimized.

The Emergence of Anti-Western Sentiment

Muslim anti-Western sentiment grew out of feelings of resentment, frustration, and humiliation caused by Western imperialism. According to Bernard Lewis, a contemporary observer of Middle Eastern affairs who has written extensively about Muslim resentment of the West,

the offense of imperialism is not from the Muslim perspective the offense of one people dominating another, but rather the domination of Muslim countries by non-Muslims.[30]

Anti-imperialism and rejection of Western values has come to characterize Muslim sentiment toward the West, but it was not always so. At first, Muslims admired Western civilization and desired to emulate it. This desire arose from a painful awareness of the weakness, poverty, and backwardness of the Islamic world compared to the West. The strength of the West as reflected in the quality of its military, its manufacturing capacity, its extensive transportation networks, and its technological achievements was seen to lie in its political institutions and its economic system. Ottoman leaders, faced with the inexorable rise of European power, attempted to graft onto their traditional society those western customs and institutions that offered them the best hopes of achieving parity with the West. The Ottoman Empire wanted to strengthen her army and navy, make her government more efficient, and vitalize her economy while at the same time retaining the life-style that its peoples had followed for centuries.[31] Reformers and modernizers therefore, had to be very discriminating in choosing which Western institutions and practices that would introduce. The dilemma then, as it remains now, was how to bring Muslim institutions into harmony with modernity. They soon learned the difficulties that accompany a program of selective westernization.

The introduction of Western commercial, financial, and industrial methods was accelerated after World War I with the Western-sponsored development and growth of the petroleum industry in the Middle East. This

brought great wealth to the region, but it accrued to Westerners, members of Westernized elites, and to only a few among the mainsteam Muslim population. It was here that the seeds of anti-imperialism were first implanted and they began to grow as those who benefited from Western largess became increasingly isolated, distant, and insensitive to the mainstream population. Over time even Western political institutions were discredited, being judged not by the Western originals, but rather by the Middle Eastern imitations established by easterners who could neither appreciate their nuances nor envision their possibilities.

Sadly, for vast numbers of Middle Easterners, Western-style economic, political, and military methods brought poverty, tyranny, and defeat.[32] It is no wonder that Middle Easterners were inclined to reject Western innovations with their promising but unrealized potentials and moved to re-embrace traditional Islamic ways and values. The mood of admiration and emulation that had initially characterized the Muslim view of European powers in the early part of the twentieth century steadily eroded so that by the mid-1960's it had completely given way to a deep, bitter, and abiding sense of hostility and rejection.

Muslims came to attribute the disruption of their traditional way of life to the impact of Western domination, the erosion of Islamic values to Western influence, and the abandonment of cherished customs to Western example. From the turn of the century until her ignominious exit from the Middle East in 1947, Britain was at the same time both the cause and the recipient of anti-imperialist and anti-western sentiment. Since then, the United States as the legitimate heir to Western civilization and

the recognized and unchallenged leader of the West, has inherited the accumulated ill-feeling of decades and become the lightning rod for Muslim hatred, anger, and frustration. Anti-American feeling among Muslims today has also been magnified by unqualified American support of Israel and support of a series of oppressive regimes that were seen as reactionary, or corrupt, or tyrannical, or all three. With the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism, the United States has been portrayed as seeking to change the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the Islamic world and is denounced as an agent of consumerism and secularism. As the most recent focus of anti-imperialism, anti-westernism, and anti-modernism, the United States has assumed the mantle that was worn by Britain in years past.

THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE IN RETROSPECT: ITS FAILINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Britain involved herself in the Middle East in order to establish territorial linkages between her colonies in Africa, dependencies in the Asian sub-continent, and dominions in the Pacific. In so doing she sought to revive the sagging fortunes of the British Empire, breathe new life into an economy wrecked by war, and capture the imagination of a disintegrating society. However, British involvement in the Middle East was to achieve nothing of the sort. It proved to be costly and unpopular. After more than four decades in the Middle East, weary, embittered, and disillusioned, Britain, in the poignant words of Sir Leopold Amery, "decamped ignominiously, amid carnage and confusion.[33]

What caused Britain's failure and what can be learned from her involvement in the Middle East? The reasons for her failure are numerous, complex, and often interrelated. Several, however, are worth considering because they hold the seeds of failure for contemporary American involvement in the Middle East. Britain failed to foresee the enormous complexities and difficulties that she would confront in dismantling the Ottoman Empire. Unrealistically, she believed that she could graft onto Muslim Asia a European political system. Moreover, in her failure to understand the political traditions of the Middle East, Britain adopted policies without consideration as to whether they could be feasibly implemented. Additionally, Britain expanded her global commitments

when she was unwilling to summon the resolve and commit the resources to honor them. Lastly, Britain lacked continuity in her strategic vision for the Middle East.

Dismantlement of Empire

With the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire by the Allies, the Middle East started along a road that was to lead to endless wars, communal strife, population transfers, and ever-widening terroism. When Britain chose to supercede the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, it is doubtful that she foresaw the enormous difficulties and complexities that she would confront. The American author F. Scot Fitzgerald once commented that "the victor belongs to the spoils". In making that remark he could very well have been describing Britain as she became increasingly captured by her circumstances, mired in a morass of intractable and seemingly insoluable problems, and confused by the challenges of imposing a new order in the Middle East.

The principal challenge that Britain confronted was determining the form and fashioning the means by which a political system based on nation-states could be implaced in the Middle East. Underlying this challenge was the issue of how diverse peoples regroup to create new political identities for themselves after the collapse of an ages-old imperial order.

The Allies proposed a post-Ottoman design which was embodied in

the Settlement of 1922. That design has not yet been embraced by the peoples of the Middle East for manv reasons but principally, because the notion of a political system based on secular nation-states was alien to the history, culture, and political traditions of the region. If we are to learn anything from the British experience, it should have to do with what role is appropriate for us to play in the evolution of a Middle Eastern political system. Clearly, the United States must be careful not to be cast as the agent for change for that would condemn it to travel the same road that Britain travelled and foreordain its entanglement, over-extension, and eventual failure. A more appropriate role for the United States is to create and maintain the conditions that would facilitate a peaceful evolution of a Middle Eastern political system. These conditions are assured mutual security and an opportunity to settle questions of territory, soverereignty, economic arrangement, and political relationship without fear of coercion or recourse to arms.

Nationalism and the Middle East

In imposing arrangements upon the region at the end of World War I, the Allies believed that they could change Muslim Asia in the very fundamentals of its political existence and in their attempt to do so they introduced an alien system of nation-states into the Middle East. In retrospect, it may seem somewhat presumptuous on the part of the Allies, but at the time, given the experience of European powers in acquiring and holding colonies throughout the world, it seemed reasonable. The system

of nation-states that the Allies sought to create however, failed to accord with the religious dimension of political life in the Middle East. The Allies recognized that Islam's hold on the region was the main feature of the political landscape and they sought to attentuate its influence on political processes by attempting to inject other loyalties. The Russians proposed communism, which was then and continues to be today, anathema to Muslim populations. The British proposed nationalism, a concept that proved to be unexpectedly difficult to graft onto Middle Eastern political processes.

The unwillingness of Middle Easterners to embrace nationalism was puzzling to Europeans. Europeans, indeed most of the world at that time, had long since come to take European political assumptions for granted. But in the Middle East, at least one of those assumptions, the modern belief in secular civil government, was alien to a region where political, social, and cultural processes were governed by Islam.

Additionally, the assumptions that underpin the concept of nationalism were at variance with traditional Islamic thinking. In traditional Islamic thought, the *ummah,* or community of believers, is the sole object of political loyalty for Muslims and all true believers are supposed to be brothers and sisters, regardless of race, language, and culture.[34] Islam, therefore, is an integrative concept in its suggestion that religion transcends secular divergencies. European nationalism, on the other hand, is a differenciating concept suggesting that nation-states grow out of ethnically similar populations whose shared language and common culture make them different and distinct from other groupings.

This conceptual divergence between Islam and nationalism explains in part the reluctance of Muslim peoples to accord nation-states their political loyalties.

This natural reluctance to accord nation-states their loyalties was further reinforced by the arbitrary manner in which Britain established nation-states. All too often Britain failed to consider local population mixes, antipathy between religious sects, long-standing claims of rival tribes, and historical divisions in delineating the geographical boundaries of nation-states. A process already difficult, was made worse by merging disparate groups. This increased the difficulty of achieving unified governments that were at the same time representative, effective, and widely supported . Taken collectively, it is not surprising that Britain did not enjoy much success in forging viable nation-states in the Middle East.

Britain was not the only country that encountered difficulties in emplacing European-like nation-states in the Middle East. With the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I, three large Middle Eastern countries gained their independence by force of arms. These countries were Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Each was compelled to develop a political system to replace that which had existed during Ottoman times and each chose to become a nation-state.

These were not democratic regimes. In each case, the agent for change was a military leader whose successes in war won him the respect and obedience of his subjects. In Turkey it was Kemal Ataturk. In Iran it was Reza Pahlavi. And in Saudi Arabia it was Ibn Saud. In each case, these

men by the force of their personalities attempted to impose a program of modernization on their countries. The degree of success that they achieved is worth examining and like the British experience, calls into question whether or not modernization can be sustained in a Middle Eastern state without some meaningful reconciliation with Islam.

Kemal Ataturk saw Islam as an impediment to progress and tried to reduce its influence. He was a western reformer who advocated a republican system of government in which political leadership was selected from the citizenry. He called on Turks to identify with the nation and reject special ties to other Muslims or to foreign ideologies. He was a populist who implemented comprehensive social change. Additionally, he advocated an active government role in the direction and management of the country's economic development. He was secular in his orientation and took action to remove religious controls over Turkish political processes. And lastly, he was committed to effecting rapid and peaceful modernization.[35]

But despite his efforts, Turkish nationalism has not yet replaced Islam within the hearts and minds of many Turks. The legacy of Kemal Ataturk's westernizing reforms is that Turkey today finds itself about equally divided between westernizers who have accepted secular values and Muslim traditionalists who desire to return the country to Muslim principles and institutions. The over-all effect of such deep and fundamental divisions, is that modern Turkey is adrift without the rudder of ideological consensus.[36]

In Iran, Reza Pahlavi was less extreme in his design to modernize

his country. He was ambivalent about Islam but recognized the influence it exercised over the Iranian people. He concentrated his efforts on liberating his country from foreign political and economic domination. To do this Pahlavi established an internal security apparatus and a centralized government. He also implemented administrative, economic, and social reforms. Either by design or happenstance a westernized elite emerged that became increasingly distant and isolated from the mainstream population and its Islamic leaders. In time, the Islamic leadership took brutal revenge on the Westernized elite in the 1979 revolution and moved to eradicate all vestiges of secularism.[37]

Unlike Kemal Ataturk and Reza Pahlavi, Ibn Saud sought to establish an Islamic nation-state. He united a disparate band of desert tribes under his rule, and imposed a regime grounded in a puritanical concept of Islam. Unfortunately, this stringent and uncompromising value system did not enable him or his people to cope with the flood of Western innovations that resulted from the vast oil revenues which accompanied the development of the Saudi Arabian petroleum industry by American oil companies. He died a bitter man disillusioned by the erosion of traditional ways of Islamic thought and life.

Where these men failed, despite however successfully they seemed to have forged their people into nation-states, was in their inability to establish a set of unifying values that could at the same time accomodate and not be destroyed by modernization.

The United States can deal more effectively with Middle Eastern countries if it learns lessons from past efforts to forge nation-states in

the Middle East. From the British experience, the U.S. must understand that the evolution of nation-states in the Middle East is atypical. In the Middle East states are not emerging from nations but rather nations are emerging from states. As a result, the U.S. must adjust its frame of reference and alter expectations if there is any hope to be attuned to a process that is alien to European traditions.

From the experience of Kemal Ataturk, Reza Pahlavi, and Ibn Saud the U.S. can learn that for modernization of Middle Eastern states to succeed , it must be decoupled from westernization. Furthermore, some sort of synthesis must be achieved which reconciles the values of Islam as a system of beliefs and behavioral norms and the values of a technical and industralized society.

Political Traditions: Disaffirmed and Discounted

During a 600-year period dating from the fourteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, Arabs did not rule themselves. Throughout this period it did not seem to matter to Arabs that they were ruled by the non-Arab Sultans of the Ottoman Empire. Traditionally, what mattered to them was that they were ruled by a Muslim government that afforded them protection, preserved order, and promoted peace in accordance with the *Shari'ah* (the comprehensive code of Muslim behavior).[38]

This is not to suggest that Muslim Arabs were without political aspirations for that certainly was not the case. Throughout the Ottoman

period, Arab leaders sought to acquire a greater measure of participation and local control in government. However, they sought to achieve these political outcomes within the governmental processes of the Ottoman Empire. The willingness of Arabs to work within the Ottoman system was reflective of Arab willingness to be ruled by Turks because the Turks were fellow-Muslims. To the Arab, what was and continues to be important in a political sense, is that he is ruled by a fellow-Muslim. This reflects that the political beliefs of Muslim Arabs exist in a religious rather than a secular framework. This was and remains a fundamental characteristic of the Muslim Middle East and one that Britain failed to fully grasp.

Britain believed that their rule offered a more attractive alternative than that offered by the Ottoman Empire and never fully understood why Arab Muslims were so reluctant to accept it. That reluctance was an expression of a religious framework which made rule by non-Arab Muslims tolerable and rule by non-Muslims intolerable.

In addition to failing to fully understand the role of religion in Middle Eastern politics, Britain also failed to understand the underlying political traditions of the region. The Sultan and his government did not rule their domains in the sense in which the British understood government and administration. Politics in the Ottoman Empire tended to be local. Tribes, clans, sects, towns, and even neighborhoods were the political entities to which loyalties adhered. This confused the British whose modern notions of nationality and citizenship had no parallels in the Ottoman Middle East and were inapplicable to the mosaic of Ottoman politics.

The failure of the British to understand the political framework and traditions of the region resulted in the adoption of policies without consideration as to whether they could be feasibly implemented. Indeed, Britain often adopted policies that held little prospect for success given their widespread lack of support among native populations and the dissatifaction, unrest, and strife that they engendered.

Notable of the many policies that she pursued that lacked feasibility was her unwillingness to grant Egypt full independence at the conclusion of World War I as she had repeatedly promised. This policy was irreconciliable with the justifiable demands of Egyptian leadership for full and complete independence and ignored the universal lack of popular support for continued British presence in Egypt. In pursuing a widely unpopular policy, Britain was obliged to maintain an armed presence at considerable costs in order to secure her control of the vitally important Suez Canal.

In Arabia, British policy was contradictory to the point of absurdity in that it compelled her to support rival claimants to the leadership of an independent Arab state in the Arabian peninsula. Her inconsistent policies with respect to the establishment of an independent Arab state left a legacy of distrust, suspicion, and hostility.

In establishing British protectorates in Iraq and Jordan under monarchs, Britain imposed an alien political structure on peoples who were disinclined to be ruled, irrespective of how cleverly veiled, by European, non-Muslim powers.

But of all the policies that Britain adopted in the Middle East that

reflected a lack of consideration with respect to their feasibility, the most notable was her policy of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Considerations of geography made it inevitable that Palestine would come under British control when the Ottoman Empire was dismantled at the end of World War I. But that Britain would, at the same time, support the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine added a new and defining twist to British imperialism in the region.

In advocating the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, Britain adopted a policy that was widely opposed. It was opposed by the French who feared that her commercial and clerical interests in the Holy Land would be endangered by British-sponsored Zionism. Further, France believed that her position in Syria and Lebanon would be threatened by a Jewish dominated state under British influence.[39] There was also opposition to the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine in the United States. Though opposition to political Zionism never coalesced into a statement of U.S. policy, the findings and recommendations of the King-Crane Commission reflected American misgivings about the notion of a Jewish state in Palestine. The commission, which was activated by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919 to look into Zionist claims in Palestine, concluded that their realization would lead to serious Jewish-Arab conflict. It also called for limits on Jewish immigration into Palestine and an end to any plan to turn the country into a Jewish national home.[40]

The establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was also opposed by elements in the Jewish community. Orthodox Jews opposed the notion

of a Jewish nation-state on religious grounds. Additionally, many influential American and European Jews were anti-Zionist out of concerns that Zionism endangered their positions within their respective societies.

Opposition to the British Palestinian policy was of course, greatest among Arabs. The Arab's main objection to the Balfour Declaration was that Arabs made up over nine-tenths of the population of Palestine.[41] Arabs understandably called into question the propriety of creating a home for one group of people in a land inhabited by another without their consent. In addition, the Balfour Declaration ignored political rights of non-Jewish Palestinians, a point that still causes deep Arab resentment. Lastly, the Balfour Declaration contradicted the Arab understanding of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence. The Hussein-McMahon correspondence was a series of letters exchanged in 1915-1916 between the British high commissioner for Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, and Hussein, the Emir of Mecca. In these letters Britain pledged that, if Hussein proclaimed an Arab revolt against Ottoman rule, she would help to create independent Arab governments in the lands in which Arabs predominated. These lands were understood by the Arabs to be Arabia, Mesopotamia (Iraq), and Syria, including Palestine and Lebanon.

Lastly, opposition to British Palestinian policy came from the British officials in Palestine whose task it was to implement it. The principle reason for the opposition of local British officials was that British Palestinian policy was unpopular with the Arabs who constituted the bulk of the population. In their view, it was a policy that created communal tension, caused violence, and unnecessarliy put them and their

families at risk. As a result, a deep-seated resentment came to undergird the consistently unsympathetic posture of the local British administration to Jewish nationalist aspirations.

The British experience in the Middle East suggests that the United States would be well-served by fashioning a Middle Eastern policy that is grounded in an understanding of the political traditions that define contemporary Middle Eastern politics. There are three such traditions and they operate at the same time.

The first and oldest of these is a tradition of tribe-like politics. It is a pre-modern form of political interaction that has at its core a harsh, almost savage, survivalist quality. It is a brand of politics that is characterized by groups who seek power in a "zero-sum game" and whose members are bound together by a spirit of solidarity, a total obligation to one another, and mutual loyalty that takes precedence over allegiances to the wider national community or nation-state. This tradition asserted itself in the power struggles that occurred in each of the nation-states that emerged from the Settlement of 1922. In each nation-state a particular tribe-like group either seized power or was ensconced in power by the British or French, and then sought to dominant all the others. In Lebanon, for example, it was the Maronites who emerged as dominant; in Saudi Arabia it was the Saud tribe; in Jordan and the Persian Gulf states it was the dynastic families established by the British; in today's Syria, it is the Alawites under the leadership of Hafez Assad; and in Iraq, it is Saddam Hussein along with members of his home village of Tikrit. In every case, what enabled these specific families or groups to dominate

was their tribe-like solidarity.

The second deeply rooted political tradition in the Middle East is a tradition of authoritarianism . The essence of this tradition is the concentration of power in a single ruler or elite who is not bound by any constitutional framework. This tradition has its roots in the centralist and autocratic methods of the many non-Arab invaders who throughout history have forcefully imposed themselves on the region. It is a tradition that is characterized by a distancing of the ruler from those whom he rules. It often finds its expression today in rulers whose sense of obligation and accountability is directed to the regimes they have established rather than to the peoples they govern.

The third political tradition at work is the tradition of the modern nation-state that was introduced into the region by the British and the French. It is the newest and least mature of the political traditions, but like the others, it figures prominently in shaping the character of Middle Eastern politics.

The United States must recognize that the politics of the region are manifestations in one form or another of one or more of these traditions. Further, it must understand that the truly adept Middle Eastern politician draws on each of these traditions to advance his interests and the interests of the tribe-like group that he leads. What often appears as inconsistency to Westerners on the part of a Middle Eastern leader, is really a change in "persona" as he moves from "tribal chief" to "autocrat" to "nationalist". The lesson to be learned is that the United States must not allow its policy to be shackled by the rhetoric of Middle Eastern

leaders. What Middle Eastern leaders say is often reflective of the adoption of a particular "persona" and frequently is not representative of their real intention. Deeds not words are the true "litmus test" of intention in the Middle East, a fact that the United States would do well to remember.

The British experience also suggests that policy must be continuously examined to determine whether in existing conditions it can be feasibly implemented. If existing conditions preclude the implementation of policy, then policy must be abandoned or modified. If neither is possible, then the conditions must be altered to make them more favorable to the implementation of policy. Failure to continually validate policy within the context of existing conditions, is, as the British so painfully learned, a recipe for disaster.

Lack of Commitment

Everywhere else in the world, with the exception of parts of Asia, European imperialism resulted in the destruction of native political structures and their replacement by new ones of European design.[42] North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, the Asian sub-continent, and Africa were no longer divided in terms of tribes. They were as a result of European colonialization divided, as Europe was, into countries. Furthermore, these countries conducted their internal and foreign affairs according to European notions of government, administration, and diplomacy.

The historical antecedents notwithstanding, there was good reason to believe that European imperialism would produce a result in the Middle East different from what it had elsewhere. This was true for two very important reasons. First, the Middle East was a region that had produced a host of proud and ancient civilizations and had beliefs that were deeply rooted in its illustrious past. Secondly, the changes Europe proposed to introduce were so profound that it would have been reasonable to believe that generations would have to pass before these changes could take root.

As events were to unfold it became increasingly clear that Britain lacked the commitment to "stay the course" in the Middle East. The period 1919-1920 was the high water mark of Britain's power in the Muslim world, but from that time forward her power ebbed. The Kemalist revolt in Turkey, nationalist uprisings in Egypt and Iraq, Arab riots in Palestine, and the emerging and unchecked Soviet threat to the new Caucasian republics in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, when taken together, caused a change in British thinking. Its public, weary of war and anxious for its armies to return home, demanded demobilization. The Parliament, not wanting to commit funds to a long-term occupation, was exerting increasing pressure to reduce commitments in the Middle East.

By 1922, Britain was disinclined to undertake a commitment of the magnitude that would be required to reshape the Middle East. The last vestiges of enthusiasm for imperialistic adventures had been swept away in the cataclysmic events of the First World War. Imperial concepts readily embraced in the first years of the war seemed anachronistic in a post-war era where Wilsonian notions of self-determination were

enjoying increasingly widespread acceptance.

British society rejected imperialism as a viable expression of national aspirations and increasingly called into question its underlying assumptions. It came to regard as fanciful the idealistic notion that imperialism was a means for extending the benefits of civilization to backward, undeveloped, and unsophisticated regions of the world. It also increasingly rejected the notion that the British Empire was benefited by iimperial expansion.

Viewing imperialistic expansion as a costly and unnecessary burden on a society that had a clear need to invest all its resources on internal rebuilding, the British public, Parliament, and press supported the government's imperial designs in the Arab Middle East only if those designs could be pursued inexpensively. Involvement in the Middle East after the First World War was thus based on the fragile assumption that Britain could reshape the Arab Middle East in accordance with its political interests, ideas, and ideals with a limited military presence and a relatively small investment of its national treasure.

That assumption proved faulty. Britain increasingly found herself confronted by armed insurrection. An obvious explanation, and arguably the correct one, was that, after the war, Britain's garrisons in the Middle East were so undermanned as to embolden opponents everywhere to defy her power. For whatever reason, her power in the Middle East eroded to the point where Britain was no longer inclined nor able to ensure that the dynasties, the nation-states, and the political system that she established would permanently endure.

Britain destroyed the old order in the region irrevocably and in its place introduced a system of nation-states. But she maintained insufficient power in the region to quell opposition and departed the region before that system could take root and flourish.

It may well be that many of the problems that plague the Middle East today, stem not merely from Britain's destruction of the old order in the region, and her decisions about how it should be replaced, but also from her lack of conviction in insuring that her designs for the region could endure. The implications for the United States are clear. Like Britain, the United States has expanded its commitments in the Middle East at a time when it is has been compelled to down-size its military; when its economy is flagging; and when a variety of domestic issues are placing increasing demands on the limited resources of government. Also like Britain, the ability of the United States to pursue its interests in the Middle East is adversely affected by factors and trends that exist now as they existed then: specifically, increasing population rates, rising expectations amidst economic decline, demands for greater political participation, rising Islamic fundamentalism, and widespread anti-Western sentiment. Perhaps most importantly, the United States, like Britain, has been the instrument by which the old order has been significantly altered and is expected to play a meaningful role in shaping a new order in the region. Unlike Britain, however, the United States must realize that the reordering of the Middle East will require a substantial and enduring commitment.

Strategic Vision

There were many reasons for the British failure in the Middle East, but the most notable was the failure to formulate an over-arching strategy and then to adhere to it. As history has revealed, Britain replaced a cogent and durable strategy with one that she did not believe in and was unprepared to implement.

Perhaps the greatest irony that emerged from the British involvement in the Middle East was captured in a comment made by Sir Mark Sykes, the British civil servant who fashioned the Sykes-Picot Agreement and figured so prominently in Middle Eastern affairs during and after World War I. In comments directed to the House of Commons in early 1914 he remarked that "the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire must be the first step towards the disappearance of our own." [43] In that remark he was warning the House of Commons of the potential consequences of abandoning policies that had historically guided British interests in the region. Wellington, Canning, Palmerston, and Disraeli were all Prime Ministers who believed that preserving the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was of vital interest to Britain.[44] In seeking to preserve the Ottoman Empire, a long succession of Prime Ministers were able to safeguard the British position in the Mediterranean and her communications with India. They were also able to conveniently remove one great cause of contention between European Powers, namely, who would inherit the Ottoman domains and who would control Constantinople.[45]

Historical considerations notwithstanding, Britain reversed the policy of more than a hundred years in her decision to wage war with the Ottoman Empire. By seeking to destroy the Ottoman Empire, Britain had lost sight of one of the most enduring and important truths of traditional British foreign policy; that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was to be protected not in order to serve the best interests of the Ottoman Turks but in order to serve the best interests of the British.[46]

Having brought about the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, Britain pursued a program for remaking the Middle East that was largely embodied in the Settlement of 1922. It is ironic that Britain fashioned a settlement that she came to neither believed in nor think it was in her best interest to impose.

From a British point of view, the Settlement of 1922 had become largely out of date by the time it was effected. It embodied much of the program for the postwar Middle East that the government had formulated mostly through the agency of Sir Mark Sykes between 1915 and 1917. But as we have seen , the Britain that emerged from the war was very much different from the one that had entered the war. The British government had changed, official thinking had changed, and as a result, the Settlement of 1922 no longer reflected what the government of the day would have wished.

In 1915 and 1916, British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey and his principal agent for Middle Eastern affairs, Sir Mark Sykes, viewed French claims to Syria favorably and acknowledged their acceptance of those claims in the instrument of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. By 1922

however, Britain's Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and officials in the field universally believed that French presence in the postwar Middle East as envisioned in the Sykes-Picot Agreement would prove destabilizing. French presence in Syria was clearly unacceptable to the Arabs, who desired an independent Arab state in Syria. The revival of French neo-colonial aspirations contradicted the principles of self-determination and non-annexation espoused by Wilsonian America and created friction between the United States and the Allied Powers that were a party to the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Moreover, an anti-Zionist French presence in Syria and Lebanon was believed by British officials in the field to have spill-over implications for Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine.

Within its own sphere in the Middle East, the British government found itself burdened by the arrangements it fashioned in the early years of the war via the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence. In 1914, 1915, and 1916, Britain had chosen to sponsor Hussein, the Emir of Mecca, and his two sons, Feisal and Abdullah as leaders of the postwar Arab Middle East. By 1918, officials had come to regard the uncooperative and frequently obstinate Hussein as a burden, who was involving them in a losing conflict with Ibn Saud. Also by 1918, officials had come to view Feisal as untrustworthy, self-serving, and unpredictable and Abudullah as lazy and ineffective. And yet, her reservations notwithstanding, Britain committed herself by the Settlement of 1922 to the rule of Feisal in Iraq and Abdullah in Transjordan.

Palestine was another area where British desires were no longer reflected in her policies. In 1922, she accepted a League of Nations

mandate to carry out the Zionist program espoused in 1917 in her ennunciation of the Balfour Declaration. In accepting the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, Britain assumed under its terms a primary obligation toward the Jews.

Unfortunately, by 1922 Britain had little enthusiasm for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. At the time that she accepted this obligation, Britain recognized it to be in conflict with her responsibilities to the Arab world and believed that it would adversely impact on her ability to pursue her national interests in the region. Indeed, even as the League of Nations Mandate was in the process of being offered to the British Parliament for acceptance, Winston Churchill, who was then the British Colonial Secretary, sought to alter its provisions. Churchill did not favor the establishment of a Jewish homeland in all of Palestine and redrafted the Mandate so that lands east of the Jordan River were excluded.

This was the first of many efforts by Britain to escape the burden of a Mandate that conscience had committed her to. Having found the original commitment too difficult and awkward to honor, Britain attempted over the years to pare back the terms of the Mandate. Finally, weary of the entanglement, and pressed by the need to solidify Arab support prior to a second European war that seemed increasingly inevitable, Britain repudiated the Mandate by issuing the MacDonald White Paper in 1939. The White Paper of 1939 prevented further Jewish immigration and land purchase in Palestine and heralded the abandonment of its obligations under the Palestinian Mandate. In the words of Winston

Churchill, a man whose career seemed inextricably intertwined with events in the Middle East, the MacDonald White Paper represented "a breach, a violation of the pledge, an abandonment of the Balfour Declaration, an end of the vision, of the hope, of the dream." [47]

It is no wonder that in the years following the Settlement of 1922, Britain governed the Middle East without a sense of direction, purposefulness, or conviction. Nor is it surprising that British involvement in the Middle East met with eventual failure. Both were the consequence of British failure to fashion an over-arching vision that could reconcile the imperatives of war with the obligations of peace in a way that would advance her national interests in the region.

CONCLUSION

The Settlement of 1922 does not belong entirely or even mostly to the past. It is at the very heart of the incessant wars, intractable problems, and violent politics that characterize the modern Middle East. The design that was imposed on the Middle East by Europeans in 1922 is even now being contested by force of arms in the ruined streets of Beirut, along the banks of the Jordan, amid the shadows of the Holy Places of Jerusalem, and under the dark pale of burning Kuwait. That legacy of violence and struggle, of hatred, frustration, bitterness, suspicion , and mistrust must be reversed if the nations of the Middle East are to benefit from economic development, social growth, and political progress.

The United States can play a meaningful role in unshackling the countries of the Middle East from the paralyzing features of the past and helping them see the possibilities of the future. In performing that role, the Unites States can learn several things from the British efforts to reshape the Middle East in the aftermath of World War I. First, the it must not underestimate the enormous complexities and difficulties that it will confront in attempting to bring peace and stability to the region. Second, it must understand that its role is not to impose change but rather to create the conditions that allow constructive change to occur. Third, it must understand the political traditions of the region so that it adopts effective policies that can be feasibly implemented. Fourth, it must be willing to summon the resolve and commit the resources to honor what

are likely to be long-term and costly commitments in the Middle East. Lastly, the United States must have a strategic vision for the Middle East which guides the formulation of economic, diplomatic, and military strategies, insures consistency, and provides continuity.

In an era when it is possible for today's friend to be tommorrow's enemy, when new national interests are emerging and old ones are being questioned, and when the comfortable assumptions of the Cold War no longer obtain, it is extremely difficult to fashion an enduring strategic vision. Nonetheless, it seems that the strategic vision for the Middle East should include at least three fundamental features. First, the United States must seek to bring about the reconciliation of Arab nationalism and Jewish Zionism so that the Arab-Israeli conflict can be terminated on terms acceptable to both Arabs and Israelis. Second, the United States, in conjunction with the Islamic regimes of the Middle East, must seek to achieve a meaningful reconciliation between the imperative to modernize and the need to retain the unifying values of Islam. Lastly, the United States must seek to pacify the political processes of the Middle East.

Arab Nationalism and Jewish Zionism

Despite their hostility toward each other, Arabs and Jews have a great deal in common. Both look back to a golden age early in their history when they experienced political power, economic prosperity, and a cultural flowering. For both, that era was followed by a long period during which their political destinies were controlled by others. The birth of

nationalism which occurred for both in the late nineteenth century, was similarly slow, painful, and uncertain. Both groups were apprehensive about embracing the ideology of nationalism and were anxious about the impacts such an ideology would have on their systems of values, beliefs, and behavioral norms. Both groups had been exploited by others throughout their histories and were justifiably suspicious and mistrustful of the intentions and motives of others.[48]

Additionally, both groups have legitimate claims on the territories that encompass parts of present day Israel and Jordan. On the strength of the Old Testament and 2,000 years of religious tradition, Zionist Jews believed that the land of Israel should be restored to them. On the other hand, Muslim Arabs believed that Palestine, for centuries a part of the Muslim community, should not be separated from the lands ruled by Islam. These ancient and conflicting beliefs find their tangible expression in the modern struggle between Arab nationalism and Jewish Zionism.

It is clear after four wars, that Arab nationalism and Jewish Zionism must be reconciled if peace and stability are to be achieved in the Middle East. It is also clear that peace can only be achieved if Arabs and Jews come together to produce a settlement that guarantees Israelis their security and Arab Palestinians their right to self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

It is also clear that a settlement cannot be fashioned by the United States unilaterally. Arabs and Israelis each have to understand that the United States can only help to deliver a settlement. The settlement must grow out of an Arab and Jewish understanding of their legitimate

interests. Further, it must reflect a genuine desire and willingness on their to nurture together something that offers the possibility of peace for future Arab and Israeli generations. That will require the present generation of Arabs and Israelis to compromise, take risk, and set aside the mistrust of the past.

The United States' role in the peace process is to clearly and forcefully articulate both the positive benefits that can accrue to the parties if they meaningfully pursue a peace settlement and the negative results if they choose not to. As Thomas Friedman suggests in the epilogue to From Beirut To Jerusalem, one of the most important things America offers in the peace process is optimism.[49] American optimism born of the belief that every problem has a solution; that people will respond to reason; and that the future can triumph over the past; is an important and necessary quality that the United States offers to the innately pessimistic and historically scarred Arab and Israeli societies.[50] It is the quality that can free Arabs and Jews from the shackles of their past and allow them to discover the possibilities of their future.

Modernization and Islam

One of the overarching challenges that confront the Islamic regimes of the Middle East is the requirement to reconcile the values of Islam as a system of beliefs and behavioral norms with the values of a technical, industrial and modern society. Islamic fundamentalism is directed against the process of change that has transformed many of the political,

economic, social, and even cultural structures of Muslim countries. It has given an aim and a form to the otherwise aimless and formless resentment and anger of the Muslim masses at the forces that they believe have devalued their traditions, erroded their beliefs, and robbed them of their aspirations and their dignity.[51]

The conflict between Islamic fundamentalism and modernity, though less visible and less explicit than the Arab-Israeli conflict, must, in like fashion, be brought to a favorable termination if the nations of the Middle East are to flourish. Like the Arab-Israeli conflict, there need not be losers. It is possible for Muslim countries to benefit from modern technologies, improved manufacturing capabilities, and expanded transportation and communications networks without abandoning traditional values, beliefs, and norms.

The dilemma is to sustain the postive aspects of modernization and at the same time retain intact the unifying values of Islam. The United States can assist the Muslim countries of the Middle East in resolving this dilemma by helping to reduce the gap between expectations and the ability of governments to satisfy those expectations. The U.S. can contribute to the economic well-being of the Middle East by fostering economic development, discouraging destabilizing and costly arms races, reducing pressures for protectionism, promoting capital investment, and advocating policies that promote the return of capital.

Pacification of Political Processes

Conventional wisdom has long held that the Arab-Israeli conflict and the resolution of the Palestinian question are the central issues of the Middle East. But an equally persuasive case can be made that the central problem in the Middle East is the region's longstanding and deeply rooted pattern of violent politics.

The latest manisfestation of this pattern is Iraq's invasion and brutal pillage of Kuwait. It finds its most recent antecedent in the internecine struggle between Iraq and Iran. Neither conflict was related to the Arab-Israeli conflict or the Palestinian question. Both however, reflect the same pattern of violence that produced anarchy in Lebanon, resulted in the destruction of Hamas in Syria, prevented the normalization of relations between Israel and her Arab neighbors, and put at risk any possibility of a Palestinian state in the West Bank.

The United States must work to reverse this destructive pattern of violence by showing that intimidation and force are no longer successful ways for pursuing national interests in the Middle East. The United States must pursue policies that are designed to weaken the forces of violence and strengthen the politics and leaders of non-violence. Peace and stability in the Middle East can come only with the renunciation of violent politics and an end to the excuses and indulgences for its practitioners.[52]

The New World Order

The world stands at a critical juncture. With the end of the Cold

War, the chances of a Soviet-American clash in any Third World conflict, including the Middle East, have greatly diminshed. Unfortunately, so have the traditional restraints that the superpowers use to impose on regional clients. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was the first crises of the post-Cold War world and as such was a defining moment in history. It heralds an era that is full of promise, but replete with challenges. The challenge to the United States, indeed to the international community, is to make aggression less likely by meeting it with a powerful response that demonstrates the collective will to insure that the rules of civilization prevail.

The current crisis has forced a reshaping of policies and relationships both in and out of the Arab world. While the direction of change is not yet clear, the longstanding issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Islamic fundamentalism, unequal distribution of wealth, and a growing sentiment for greater political expression will exert pressure to determine that direction. The United States, by building upon its enhanced prestige and demonstrated skill in marshalling the strength of the international community, can shape change in the Middle East through resolute and imaginative leadership.

In what way should that leadership be applied? First, the United States must understand that the international environment is increasingly characterized by a desire to seek political resolution of regional conflict. This represents a significant departure from the past, particularly with regard to the Middle East. In the past, the Soviet Union did not want a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute because its prolongation weakened

the United States in the Arab world, provided opportunities for Moscow's arms sales diplomacy, and strengthened the revolutionary fervor of "radical" states. [53] Now, it seems that the Soviet Union and the United States are likely to agree on several priniciples relating to an Arab-Israeli settlement. Both recognize the unacceptability of a military solution; the need for Israel to surrender land for peace; Israel's right to secure borders; the need to satisfy Palestinian aspirations and rights to self-determination; and the need to secure the goals of Palestinians and Israelis within the framework of an overall Arab-Israeli settlement.[54]

In order to achieve a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East, the United States must relinquish its exclusive custodianship of the peace process and involve the Soviet Union meaningfully in helping to fashion a regional peace. The efforts of the super powers must be complementary. The Soviet Union must pressure factions in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to become more moderate and make it clear to Syria that it will not support a military solution to the conflict. The United States must apply pressure on Israel to meaningfully participate in the peace process.

Additionally, the United States must work to pacify political processes in the region by encouraging the Soviet Union to normalize relations with all states in the Middle East. This will reduce the separation between the moderate and radical states in the region. Additionally, the United States and the Soviet Union must jointly insure that states in the Middle East benefit more by acquiescing to a peace process than they do by pursuing rejectionist policies.

The United States must also work to introduce and nurture democatic institutions. The Middle East has changed in a lot of respects in the recent past. Politics have grown more subtle, interests more shaded, and rhetoric more muted as the interests of individual states have become more differentiated. Though democracy has not traditionally fared well in the Middle East, there are encouraging signs that democratic institutions will be embraced as sentiment grows for greater political expression. Democratic practices have taken root in Egypt and in the recent past, Jordan and Kuwait have taken tentative steps toward democratization. Democracy, if it can be extended into the Middle East, will have several positive benefits. First, it will limit to some extent a state's previous capability to pursue hostile designs against its neighbors. Secondly, it will attenuate the effects of Islamic fundamentalism by subjecting fundamentalists to the same requirements of other political aspirants with regard to the generation of credible programs of political and social action. Lastly, if the historical precedents obtain, democratization of political processes will produce economic growth and through economic growth and development many of the root sources of grievances within the region can be leveraged.

The outlook for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East is vastly better now than it has ever been. That is so because of the potential for U.S.-Soviet cooperation in the pursuit of a genuine Arab-Israeli settlement. It remains to the leadership of the United States to have the vision to forge a new relationship with the Soviet Union. Similarly, U.S. leadership must recognize that exclusive and uncritical

acceptance of all aspects of Israel's security policies puts at risk U.S. regional goals, threatens good relations with Arab nations, and compromises U.S. ability to assist in fashioning a comprehensive peace settlement. If the proper relationships are forged between the United States and the Soviet Union, Arab nations, and Israel, then regional peace can be achieved.

ENDNOTES

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2. Ibid., p. 26.

3. Ibid., p. 29.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 34.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 235.

8. Ibid., p. 281.

9. Arthur Goldschmidt, A Concise History of the Middle East, p. 29.

10. Fromkin, p. 493.

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12. Ibid., p. 457.

13. Ibid., p. 559.

14. Ibid., p. 461.

15. Ibid.

16. Goldschmidt, p. 246.

17. Ibid., p. 198.

18. Barbara Tuchman, Bible and Sword: How the British Came to Palestine, p. 336.

19. Ibid., p. 345.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p. 346.

22. Ibid., p. 347.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ronald Sanders, The High Walls of Jerusalem: A History of the Balfour Declaration and the Birth of the British Mandate For Palestine, p. 648.

26. Ibid., p. 663.

27. Ibid., p.664.

28. Thomas L. Friedman, From Beirut to Jerusalem, p. 14.

29. Fromkin, p. 564.

30. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage", Atlantic, September, 1990, p. 56.

31. Goldschmidt, p. 155.

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33. Sir Leopold Amery, Letter to the London Times, 14 May 1948.

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37. Ibid., p. 219.

38. Ibid., p. 188.

39. Fromkin, p. 442.

40. Goldschmidt, p. 200.

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44. Ibid.

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46. Fromkin, p. 75.

47. Tuchman, p. 348.

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49. Friedman, p. 499.

50. Ibid

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52. Jeane Kirkpatrick, "After It's Over," Patriot News, 27 January 1991, p. B-7.

53. Graham E. Fuller, "The Middle East In U.S.-Soviet Relations", Middle East Journal, Summer 1990, p.421.

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